CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Friday, 26 March 1999, at 3.35 p.m.

President: Mr. Nguyen Quy Binh (Viet Nam)

GE.99-61116 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 822nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend, on behalf of all of us, a very warm welcome to the President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, who will be addressing the Conference today. The Conference is highly appreciative of the fact that President Jiang Zemin found it possible to be with us today despite his very heavy schedule. His visit to the Conference is a testimony to the importance he personally attaches to the multilateral approach to arms control and disarmament, and to the success of our common endeavours.

I now invite the President of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Mr. Jiang Zemin, to address the Conference.

Mr. JIANG (China) (translated from Chinese): The Conference on Disarmament located along Lake Leman in Geneva is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body in the world today, and as such it plays an indispensable role in safeguarding world peace and security. What you are doing is arduous but lofty work.

Looking back on the twentieth century, we see a century of unprecedented wars and calamities and of the tenacious struggle by people of all countries to achieve and safeguard world peace. The two world wars and the cold war, which lasted for more than four decades, inflicted untold suffering and pain on mankind and also left behind profound lessons.

Since the end of the cold war, major and profound changes have taken place in the international situation. The world is moving deeper towards multipolarity and economic globalization which is, on the whole, conducive to the relaxation of the international situation and to world peace and development.

The turn of the century affords us a good opportunity to sum up historical experience and lessons and shape a lasting peace for the future. An overview of the current global reality reveals that the cold war mentality still lingers on and hegemonism and power politics manifest themselves from time to time. The tendency towards closer military alliance is on the rise. New forms of "gunboat diplomacy" are rampant. Regional conflicts have cropped up one after another.

When air strikes and armed intervention were launched against Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia two days ago, I promptly expressed my deep concern and worry, and called for the immediate cessation of military strikes so as to bring the Kosovo issue back to the track of political settlement. I hereby solemnly reiterate that the military actions against Kosovo and other parts of Yugoslavia violate the norms governing international relations and are detrimental to the peace of the Balkan region. The international community should therefore make joint efforts in order to defuse the crisis as soon as possible.

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On the issue of arms reductions, I have to point out with regret that military Powers have not cut down their state-of-the-art weaponry, not even a single piece. Furthermore, they are still developing it. International efforts against nuclear proliferation are faced with severe challenges. Under these circumstances, the question of how to advance the disarmament process and how to safeguard global security cannot but become an important and pressing task that demands the attention of all countries in the world.

History tells us that the old security concept based on military alliances and the build-up of armaments will not help ensure global security. Still less will it lead to a lasting world peace. This, then, requires the cultivation of a new security concept that meets the need of our times and calls for vigorous efforts to explore new ways to safeguard peace and security.

We believe that the core of such a new concept of security should be mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation. The five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence, and other universally recognized norms governing international relations make up the political foundations underpinning world peace. Mutually beneficial cooperation and common prosperity constitute the economic guarantee for world peace. Dialogue, consultations and negotiations by parties concerned, on an equal footing, are the correct approach to solving disputes and safeguarding peace. The establishment of a new concept of security and a new just and fair international order is the only way to fundamentally promote the healthy development of the disarmament process and provide a guarantee for international peace and security.

The aim of disarmament is to increase security, but security must be universal for all countries to enjoy. All countries, regardless of their size, strength and wealth, should have an equal right to security. If the great majority of developing countries cannot have security, then the entire world will never be tranquil. Disarmament should not become a tool for stronger nations to exert control over weaker ones, still less should it be a means for a handful of countries to optimize their armaments in order to seek unilateral security. To reduce the armaments of others whilst keeping one's own intact, to reduce the obsolete while developing the state-of-the-art, or even to sacrifice the security of others for one's own security and to require other countries to scrupulously abide by treaties while giving oneself freedom of action by placing domestic laws above international law: such double standards make a mockery of international disarmament efforts and run counter to the fundamental purposes and objectives of disarmament.

Historical experience shows that an unrestrained arms build-up will surely hamper economic growth and will not help maintain peace and security. Disarmament should also serve to release more resources and create better conditions for the economic development of all countries, developing countries in particular. One of the criteria to judge a disarmament treaty is to see whether it facilitates the economic growth of various countries, especially

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that of developing countries, and whether it helps to strengthen international cooperation in science and technology. No disarmament measure will be able to garner universal support or have lasting viability if it is taken at the expense of the economic or scientific development of most countries.

Disarmament is not the prerogative of the few. All countries have the right to participate therein on an equal footing. Multilateral disarmament treaties are the result of negotiations through universal participation and therefore reflect the common will of the international community. Some export control regimes by a small group of countries can in no way compare with these international treaties, either in impartiality or in universality. To maintain bloc arrangements after the conclusion of multilateral treaties, and even place the former above the latter, will only weaken the authority and universality of multilateral treaties and hence affect the healthy development of the international cause of disarmament. Therefore, vigorous efforts should be made to strengthen the role of the disarmament bodies of the United Nations so that multilateral treaties may gradually replace bloc arrangements.

Over the past 50 years and more, hanging like Damocles' sword above mankind, nuclear weapons have never ceased to threaten the survival of humanity. The end of the cold war has not brought about the disappearance of nuclear weapons. The nuclear reduction process by the United States and Russia has become bogged down in stalemate after a brief period of progress. Nuclear-weapon tests were again conducted even after the conclusion of the CTBT. These developments have demonstrated clearly that today, and for a long time to come, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament remain an important task for the international community. The accomplishment of this task calls for joint unremitting efforts by the international community. We believe that, at this stage, efforts should be made to achieve progress particularly in the following areas.

First, as countries possessing the largest nuclear arsenals in the world, the United States and Russia shoulder greater responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. The two countries should effectively implement the nuclear reduction treaties they have concluded, and on that basis continue to substantially cut down their respective nuclear arsenals, thereby paving the way for the other nuclear-weapon States to participate in the multilateral nuclear disarmament process.

Second, the NPT is both the basis of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the prerequisite for progress in the nuclear disarmament process. The NPT must be observed in full and in good faith. Otherwise, international efforts for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation will be seriously hampered. Those countries which have not yet joined the NPT should do so at the earliest possible date so as to make the treaty truly universal.

The prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation and the complete and thorough destruction of nuclear weapons are mutually complementary. The complete elimination of nuclear weapons is the objective that we are all striving for, while the prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation is an

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effective means and a necessary stage to that end. It was in line with this understanding that China supported the indefinite extension of the NPT. However, the indefinite extension of the NPT has by no means given nuclear-weapon States the prerogative to retain their nuclear weapons permanently. On the contrary, nuclear-weapon States should faithfully fulfil their nuclear disarmament obligations so as to promote, with concrete actions, the early realization of complete nuclear disarmament.

Third, nuclear-weapon States should, as soon as possible, undertake unconditionally and in a legally binding manner not to be the first to use nuclear weapons or use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. On the first day when China came into possession of nuclear weapons, it openly announced that it would never be the first to use nuclear weapons at any time and under any circumstances. Thereafter, China has also pledged in an unequivocal manner that it will not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Since the non-nuclear-weapon States have explicitly forgone the development of nuclear weapons, it goes without saying that they should be free from the threat of nuclear weapons. Now that the cold war has ended and the relations between nuclear-weapon States have improved, the conditions are now ripe for them to commit themselves to mutual no-first-use of nuclear weapons. China is ready to push actively for the early conclusion of an international legal instrument on this issue.

Fourth, efforts should be made for the early entry into force of the CTBT according to the CTBT provisions. The recent nuclear tests have made the early entry into force of the treaty an even more pressing task. As one of the first countries to have signed the treaty, China will continue to work for the early entry into force of the treaty. The Chinese Government will soon officially submit the treaty to the National People's Congress for ratification.

Fifth, negotiations should be conducted as soon as possible for the conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty. Once concluded, the FMCT will be yet another major achievement after the CTBT in the promotion of nuclear disarmament and the prevention of nuclear proliferation. All of you present here are making intensive efforts to this end, and I wish you success.

Sixth, on the basis of the above efforts, a convention providing for a comprehensive ban on nuclear weapons should be negotiated. In view of the fact that the two types of weapons of mass destruction of biological and chemical weapons have been comprehensively prohibited, there is no reason why nuclear weapons, which are of greater destructive force, should not be comprehensively banned and thoroughly destroyed. What it takes to reach this objective is nothing more than strong political will.

To eliminate nuclear weapons and root out the dangers of nuclear war is the common wish of people throughout the world. It is also an objective that the Chinese Government and people have been unswervingly striving for. Let us all work together for the ultimate realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

(Mr. Jiang, China)

Progress in nuclear disarmament cannot be achieved without global strategic equilibrium and stability. The research, development, deployment and proliferation of sophisticated anti-missile systems and the revision of, or even withdrawal from, the existing disarmament treaties on which global strategic equilibrium hinges will inevitably exert an extensive negative impact on international security and stability and trigger a new round of the arms race in new areas, thereby seriously obstructing or neutralizing international efforts of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The international community should pay close attention to this and adopt the necessary measures to pre-empt such dangerous developments.

The Chinese nation is a peace-loving nation. The tapestry of the Hall of Prayer for Harvest in the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, which is on display in the Palais des Nations as a gift from China to the United Nations, gives expression to the wish of the Chinese people for good weather, bumper harvests, national stability and the happiness of all peoples throughout the world. To work for peace, stability, cooperation and development is the common aspiration of all peace-loving countries and peoples. The planet we are living on should become a home where all peoples can live together in amity and peace and can enjoy their life and work. We must remember the bitter lessons of the two world wars and never waver in our efforts for world peace and security.

As a famous Tang Dynasty poet, Li Bai, has written: "A time will come to ride the wind and cleave the waves. I will set my cloud-white sail and cross the sea which raves." I am confident that with the common effort of the world's people, a genuine will of the statesmen of all countries and hard work by all of you, the disarmament cause will surely overcome one obstacle after another and achieve continuous progress and the world will have a better future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the President of the People's Republic of China for his important statement.

This concludes our business for today and the first part of our annual session. Since Thursday, 13 May 1999 is a holiday and the Palais des Nations will be closed the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 11 May 1999, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.